

**Mid-Pacific Region  
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Media Contact: Louis Moore, 916-978-5100, [wmoore@usbr.gov](mailto:wmoore@usbr.gov)

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## **Federal Agencies Collaborate to Fund Projects for Improved Agricultural Water Use Efficiencies in Drought-Stricken Areas of California**

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – The Bureau of Reclamation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are collaborating in providing federal funds to California water districts, irrigation districts, tribes, and other organizations with water or power delivery authority located in California to improve the efficiency of agricultural water use throughout the state.

One of the worst droughts in decades prompted Governor Jerry Brown to issue an emergency drought proclamation on January 17. In order to provide flexibility for local and state water managers, the Obama Administration is committed to coordinated federal actions and investments.

"The situation in California is critical and requires a swift and effective response at all levels of government," Reclamation Commissioner Michael L. Connor said. "Reclamation and NRCS are part of a larger partnership of state, federal, tribal, local and other partners who are focusing all available resources and creativity to meet this ongoing challenge across the state. Reclamation and NRCS are working together to leverage federal funds for water delivery agencies and agricultural producers and will provide up to \$14 million in funding for water districts and associated growers to conserve water and improve water management. We are working around the clock with the National Drought Resilience Partnership to identify a multitude of ways we can provide support to California today and in the future."

The [National Drought Resilience Partnership](#) provides coordination between seven federal agencies to help communities increase preparedness for drought and reduce the impact of drought events. It will also build on existing efforts to provide states, tribes and local communities with decision making tools for drought preparedness planning.

Reclamation/NRCS partnership projects funded in Fiscal Year 2014 will help communities build resilience to drought, including modernizing their water infrastructure and efficiently using scarce water resources, while supporting the agricultural economy.

Water conservation and efficiency improvement projects implemented since the Reclamation/NRCS partnership was established in 2011 have helped water purveyors and producers prepare for and respond to the current drought conditions. The \$20.8 million invested through that program has already saved 38,000 acre-feet of water each year by purveyors and helped increase water efficiencies on-farm by an average of 25 percent. An early member of this partnership, the Southern San Joaquin Irrigation District, announced in 2013 that farmers served by the project increased their crop yields by 30 percent, using 30 percent less water.

Reclamation has made available a Funding Opportunity Announcement to invite tribes, irrigation districts, water districts and other organizations with water or power delivery authority located in California to leverage their money and resources by cost sharing with Reclamation on projects that conserve water, improve water management, and create new supplies for agricultural irrigation. Projects should also increase the capability or success rate of on-farm water conservation or water use efficiency projects that can be undertaken by farmers and ranchers through irrigation system improvements and irrigation efficiency enhancements.

As part of the Reclamation/NRCS partnership, NRCS – through 2014 Farm Bill programs – will provide funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers for the eligible on-farm conservation practices of selected projects under this FOA. On-farm water conservation practices could include irrigation improvements such as conversion to sprinkler or drip systems, micro-irrigation, and tail water recovery systems. Reclamation and NRCS will each provide up to \$7 million for this effort.

Proposals must be submitted on line at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) using Funding Opportunity Number R14AS00021. The deadline for submission is Monday, Mar. 24, 2014, at 12 p.m. PDT. It is anticipated that awards will be made this spring. For additional information, please contact Gene Lee at 916-978-5219 (TTY 800-877-8339) or [glee@usbr.gov](mailto:glee@usbr.gov).

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